



On June 13, 2006, State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, MD conducted a follow up to the state Obesity Summit. She met with representatives of several local agencies working to improve the health of residents in the counties that make up Region 1. The meeting was conducted at St. Mary's Medical Center in Hobart.

During the meeting, several agencies were awarded grants including:

- The YMCA of Gary, Southlake YMCA in Crown Point and Portage Township YMCA. All three will use their money to help fund their own programs aimed at childhood obesity prevention.
- The Boys & Girls Clubs of Porter County, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Indiana and Boys & Girls Clubs in Michigan City will use grant money for a program that teaches the components of a healthy lifestyle.
- Merrillville Parks and Recreation, Lake County Parents as Teachers and Fitness Pointe, a department of the Community Healthcare System, were also among the recipients.

After the grant award announcements, Dr. Monroe shared some local statistics that placed Lake County at or below national averages in several categories.

For example, 32.4 percent of the children in Lake County reportedly had no physical activity in the past month. The national average is 26.8. A community health survey in 2004 also found more than 20 percent of Lake County children ages 6 to 17 were overweight. Nearly 28 percent were found to be overweight in Porter County.

Lake County did well in the childhood obesity category, scoring a 20 percent rate as opposed to a national mean of 24 percent, Dr. Monroe said. Porter County had a 27 percent rate, while LaPorte scored a 23 percent rate.

Lake County was above the state and national averages in the number of people who smoke, and the state ranked No. 2 in the nation for smokers per capita.

Dr. Monroe said the number of women who admitted smoking while pregnant was alarming. In Lake County, 14 of pregnant women smoked, compared with 18 percent in Indiana and 10 percent nationwide.